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General Assembly
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Agenda item 5
Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 31 May 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to my letter yesterday about the grave impact of Israel's illegal settlement colonization campaign in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, I am compelled to draw the attention of the international community further to a series of illegal actions committed in the recent period by the occupying Power and the extremist settlers it has illegally transferred to the Palestinian land, which are exacerbating already high tensions and instability.

Israeli settlers continue their terror rampages, persisting with attacks on Palestinian civilians, destruction of properties and theft of land and natural resources. Settler provocations in Occupied East Jerusalem, particularly at al-Haram al-Sharif, also continue to gravely threaten the fragile situation. The lawlessness of settlers and the failure of the Israeli Government to reign them in and hold them accountable for their crimes, combined with its reckless, incessant pursuit of illegal settlement construction, which emboldens settler impunity, cast serious doubts over Israel's professed intentions and commitment to peace based on the two-State solution. Moreover, such actions foment greater instability and undercut the efforts to promote an environment conducive to the pursuit of peace.

Among the many violent, destructive acts committed by extremist Israeli settlers in the recent period have been the following: settlers burned lands in the villages of Urif, Einabous and Asira al-Qibliya, and assaulted Palestinians, injuring three people, and threw burning tyres at homes (18 May); settlers attacked and beat a 16-year-old disabled Palestinian boy in Yatta village, leading to his hospitalization (21 May); settlers slashed the tyres of at least 15 Palestinian-owned cars in the Sheikh Jarrah and Shu'fat neighbourhoods of Occupied East Jerusalem (27 May); settlers again set fire to fields in Zeef village, destroying 5,000 square metres of wheat and barley crops (28 May); settlers poured gasoline on and burned cars and a farm tractor, and vandalized homes with threatening "price tag" graffiti (28 May); in the villages of Far'ata and Jeet, settlers torched wheat fields and olive trees

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(29 May); and settlers erected mobile homes in the fields of al-Khader village, trying to entrench a so-called "outpost" in the area (30 May). Today, settlers continued their attacks on religious sites, vandalizing for the second time the Church of the Dormition, located just outside the walls of the Old City, with hateful graffiti, including slurs against Jesus and vengeful threats. We condemn all of these illegal actions and reiterate that Israel, the occupying Power, is ultimately responsible for the actions of its settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and that there must be accountability for all of their crimes against the Palestinian people.

Recent weeks have also witnessed Israel's continued demolition of Palestinian homes and properties, causing the forced displacement of more Palestinian civilians. At the same time, the occupying Power has continued to pursue illegal measures aimed at the forced transfer of the Bedouin population in the areas of Occupied East Jerusalem and the Jordan Valley. As indicated in recent United Nations reports, Israeli demolitions and the displacement of Palestinians in so-called "Area C" have grown steadily since 2009. In 2012, 886 Palestinians endured forced displacement as a result of Israel's demolition of 598 Palestinian homes and other structures. From January to April 2013, 156 Palestinian structures were destroyed by Israel, displacing another 309 Palestinians, while thousands more families remain under threat of displacement. In this regard, we recall that the forced displacement or transfer of civilians by the occupying Power, the destruction of civilian properties and acts of collective punishment are all breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In recent weeks, Israel has committed the following illegal acts of destruction: demolition of two Palestinian homes in Jabal al-Mukkabir in Occupied East Jerusalem, which displaced five families, and two other homes in the al-Tur neighbourhood in the city, which displaced eight persons (21 May); demolition of three homes, two greenhouses and two barns in al-Jiftlik village; demolition of two Palestinian homes in Beit Hanina, displacing 10 persons (29 May); destruction of agricultural fields by bulldozers and fires during a military raid near al-Qarara village, east of Khan Younis, in the Gaza Strip (29 May); and destruction of Palestinian farmland in central Gaza, near the Bureij refugee camp, following a military raid on the area (30 May).

Further provoking and inciting, Israel has also continued to carry out violent military raids throughout the country, arresting and detaining dozens more Palestinians. These raids have also caused injury to civilians and damage to property, particularly homes, as excessive force continues to be used by the occupying forces and the raids are typically carried out in the pre-dawn hours. On 27 May, 14 Palestinian men were arrested in raids in the village of Budrus, including Abdelrahman Awad, 19 years of age, whose family suffered the killing of their younger son, Samir Awad, 16 years of age, when he was shot in the head and back by Israeli occupying forces in January of this year. On 28 May, occupying forces detained an 8-year-old boy from Silwan. This is not the first incident in which a child this young has been seized and detained by the occupying Power, as it was preceded by the detention and interrogation of two Palestinian boys, 5 and 6 years of age (16 May), as well as of 12 students at an orphanage school in Occupied East Jerusalem (22 May), based on claims that they were throwing stones. Such deplorable acts, which are terrorizing and traumatizing Palestinian children, constitute gross human rights violations that must be ceased. These acts were followed by the arrests of 12 other Palestinians, the youngest of them 12 and 15 years of age, in Occupied

East Jerusalem (29 May), and by the arrests yesterday of at least 29 Palestinians, including several university students.

Israeli occupying forces also continue to use violence and excessive force against Palestinian civilians and international activists partaking in peaceful protests. In recent weeks several Palestinians were injured by the firing of rubber-coated bullets, tear-gas canisters, stun grenades and water cannons. Among the injured was an 11-year-old boy, Mohammed Issa, shot in the face by the occupying forces that attacked a protest in the town of al-Khader, near Bethlehem.

We reiterate our calls upon the international community to condemn these illegal and provocative Israeli actions, and to act collectively to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease its violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to abide fully by its legal obligations. The Security Council, in particular, must uphold its duty under the Charter of the United Nations to address this situation, which constitutes a constant threat to peace and security in the region and beyond. Contributing to the de-escalation of tensions and the respect of international law should be viewed as imperatives, not interference, as we seek to salvage the slim possibility that remains for the two-State solution for peace and to pave the way forward for a credible political process to achieve it.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 466 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 30 May 2013 (A/ES-10/594-S/2013/322), constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer